What is claimed is:

1. An isolated nucleic acid sequence for promoting expression of heterologous molecules in the plastids of higher plants selected from the group of Prrn sequences having SEQ ID NOS: 4-30.

2. The nucleic acid sequence of claim 1 operably linked to a sequence encoding a heterologous molecule of interest or precursor thereof.

3. A vector comprising the nucleic acid sequence of claim 2.

4. A transgenic plant comprising the vector of claim 3.

5. The sequence of claim 1, wherein expression of said heterologous molecule is increased relative to that observed using wild type Prnn sequence.

6. The sequence of claim 1, wherein expression of said heterologous molecule is decreased relative to that observed using wild-type Prnn sequence.

7. An isolated nucleic acid sequence for promoting expression of heterologous molecules in the plastids of higher plants comprising mutations which mimimize homologous recombination at the Prrn operon having the sequence of SEQ ID NO: 51.

8. The nucleic acid sequence of claim 7 operably linked to a sequence encoding a heterologous molecule of interest or precursor thereof.

9. A vector comprising the nucleic acid sequence of claim 8.

10. A transgenic plant comprising the vector of claim 9.

11. A chimeric promoter for expression of transgenes in plastids of higher plants, comprising at least one PTME operably linked to a promoter element selected from the group provided in Table I, said chimeric promoter being further operably linked to a sequence encoding a heterologous molecule of interest.

12. The chimeric promoter of claim 11 wherein said PTME is SEQ ID NO: 50 and the promoter is rbcl.

13. The chimeric promoter of claim 11 wherein said PTME is SEQ ID NO: 50 and the promoter is psbD.

14. A vector comprising the sequence of claim 11.

15. A plant comprising the vector of claim 11.

16. A vector comprising the chimeric promoter of claim 12.

17. A vector comprising the chimeric promoter of claim 13.